immediate issue relating the Sales Tax has since been settled by the Govt, in consultation with the C&AG.

Though even during the strike period, arrangements were made by CGHS for supply of medicines, resumption of supply by local chemists has helped in easing the availability of medicines.

NABL certificate for Clinical Reference Laboratories

507. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering a proposal to make it mandatory for clinical reference laboratories to obtain the National Accreditation Board for Calibration and Laboratory Testing (NABL) certification before granting them licences to operate;

(b) whether out of 30,000 clinical reference laboratories in the country only a handful are NABL accredited; and

(c) if so, the details of the scheme and the likely date of completion of NABL certification?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The National Accreditation Board for Testing & Calibration Laboratories (NABL) has intimated that the Accreditation for Clinical Laboratories is a recently started voluntary scheme. Since accreditation is an ongoing process and voluntary, there is no specific date for its completion. However, Central Government is considering putting in place standards and specifications that will prescribe minimum standards for hospitals, nursing homes and other clinical establishments, which the State Governments should adhere to. In the draft of the proposed legislation, there is a provision for establishment of Central Council for laying down norms for assessment, accreditation, inspection, certification, regulation and maintenance of records. There is also a provision for establishment of Assessment and Accreditation Council at States level.